

# No room for violence, illegal strikes

PRETORIA: The Minister of Mineral Resources, Susan Shabangu, has warned that government will not tolerate anarchy, violence, intimidation and illegal strikes in the mining sector.



Minister of Mineral Resources,  
Susan Shabangu

"We are accordingly calling on all signatories to honour the letter and spirit of the law and the recently signed 'peace and stability framework' of the mining industry," she said.

Delivering her department's Budget Vote in Cape Town on Tuesday, 28 May 2013, Shabangu said government respected workers' inalienable right to strike and the right to the freedom of association, as enshrined in the Constitution.

"We need urgently to join hands and deal a cruel blow to those who are wilfully undermining the well-established system of collective bargaining that has been a critical component of the mining industry," she said.

She called on union representatives to carry the workers' best interests at heart during negotiations by taking decisions that will retain jobs, bring about the stability of the sector and ultimately help the economy as it emerges from the ravages of the recent economic downturn.

"We should all take responsibility and accountability for the success of these negotiations. For if we do not grasp the nettle, we run the risk of losing jobs and further fuelling negative perceptions that are being used to run our country down at the most inopportune time.

"Accordingly, we believe that if we can work together and forgo our narrow interests and act in the interests of all our people, we will indeed be able to rise to the challenge of regrouping and consolidating the existing building blocks for the long-term success of our mining industry," she said.

## Challenges faced by the sector

Last week, Shabangu and Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan met with the leadership of the mining industry to address the challenges faced by the sector. This followed President Jacob Zuma's call for leaders of this industry to restore calm and confidence in the sector.

"In this all-important meeting, we agreed on a specific programme of action. We agreed that the government side will be led by the National Treasury, Department of Labour and the Department of Mineral Resources, while participation from the mining companies will be led by Chairpersons of the Boards and will also engage the leadership of trade unions," Shabangu said.

She said this was bold and decisive action taken with a view to dealing head-on with the challenges faced by the economy.

"This has arisen as a result of a crisis of perception, of both our country and the mining industry which invariably has an effect on, among others, the fluctuation of our exchange rate, the result of which we can ill afford as a country."

The process that was established at the meeting is scheduled to conclude its initial tasks and provide a progress report within a month.

## Mining charter

Turning her attention to the mining charter, Shabangu said it was a consensus document by mining stakeholders that introduced a transitional transformation window of 10 years, with specific targets to be attained by 2014.

"We subjected the efficacy of this transformation tool to a rigorous test in 2009 in respect of its progress, the findings of which were less than desirable.

"We have no intention of shifting the goal posts with regard to our targets, but we wish to reiterate that we remain unequivocal and resolute in our commitment to transformation, which remains a vital component of normalising our society and creating a genuinely non-racial and democratic country, without which we do not have a prosperous future," Shabangu said.

Shabangu also called on the entire mining industry to develop a 10-year company specific strategy that will transition the industry from the obsolete model, to be part of the modern society within which it operates, without creating abrupt discontinuities that result in unnecessary instability.

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